



"We Care and it Shows"  
Specializing in Short Term Rehabilitation  
& Subacute Care

February 5, 2015

*Written testimony of Robert F. Fritz, Administrator, Sheriden Woods Health Care Center, Concerning*

**\*Proposed H.B. No. 5586 AN ACT INCREASING NURSING FACILITY RATES.**

**\*Proposed H.B. No. 5812 AN ACT CONCERNING A COST OF LIVING INCREASE FOR NURSING FACILITIES.**

**\*Proposed S.B. No. 231 AN ACT CONCERNING COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES FOR NURSING HOMES.**

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie and to the members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Robert Fritz. I am the Administrator at Sheriden Woods Health Care Center in Bristol, Connecticut. Sheriden Woods is a longstanding provider of nursing care in the Bristol community, with 146 skilled nursing beds and over 235 employees.

First I want to publicly thank the state legislators who introduced these badly needed bills---House Republican Leader Klarides, and Representatives Perillo and Gentile, and State Senator Crisco. And thank you also to the Human Services Committee for including these bills at this public hearing.

The bills all get to the same issue. Medicaid Nursing facility rates have been basically flat since 2007, but costs have been dramatically rising. The bills address the fundamental problem of the escalating cost of providing high quality health care by increasing payments based on a cost of living adjustment.

The message from the operator's point of view is simple----Our skilled nursing facilities need your help. We just can't continue on a path where no help is provided without strapping our employees and jeopardizing quality.

Here are some examples of what we are up against in our nursing facility while the rates have been stagnant:

- Costs for food, utilities, criminal background checks, encryption software have significantly increased.
- Costs of health insurance premiums for employees also continue to rise.

- There is a increase in patient acuity. We are treating and caring for patients who are very compromised with multiple co-morbidities, requiring a great deal of skilled care. Those individuals that are relatively healthy are going directly home from the hospitals.
- Rising costs of medications and medications not being covered by Medicare D Plans or Medicaid, forcing the facility to cover the costs. In addition, medication costs for Medicare A residents have increased and these costs are covered in our inclusive rates.
- Our long term residents are aging in place and requiring much more care. The average age of a resident at Sheriden Woods is over 81 years old.
- Difficulties and challenges in collecting applied income from residents to pay for care, due to the economy of our state and the increasing shared dependence of families on an elderly person's social security and pension

I am asking you to advance these bills and provide our nursing facilities the help they need to care for our residents.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.